An Assessment of the Linguistic Competence of Intermediate School Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The present study aims at assessing the linguistic competence of EFL (henceforth English as a foreign language) intermediate school teachers. The study is limited to the teachers of English who teach at the intermediate day schools for boys and girls in the city of Ramadi schools during the academic year 2012-2013. To achieve the purpose of the present study, it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of intermediate school teachers' achievement, on one hand and the theoretical mean scores of the linguistic competence test, on the other hand. Also, it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference in the linguistic competence between male and female EFL teachers. The researcher constructed a test as the main tool in this study for collecting data . The sample of this study includes 56 EFL teachers (28 male and 28 female) from the intermediate schools in Ramadi which has been randomly selected. The EFL teachers of the sample have been subjected to the linguistic competence test. The collected data has been analysed by using t-test formula. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of intermediate school teachers' achievement, on one hand and the theoretical mean scores of the linguistic competence test, on the other hand. Concerning the second hypothesis, results reveal that there is no significant difference in the linguistic competence between male and female EFL teachers. On the basis of the findings, the study suggests a number of conclusions and recommendations.

مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقويم الكفاية اللغوية لمدرسي اللغة الانكليزية في المدارس المتوسطة ويعتبر مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية في المدارس المتوسطة للبنين و البنات في مدينة الرمادي للعام الدراسي 2012-2013 حدود هذه الدراسة، ومن أجل تحقيق هذا الهدف افترض الباحث بأنه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الوسط الحسابي لتحصيل للعينة من جهة، والوسط الفعلي للاختبار من جهة أخرى، كما افترض الباحث انه لا يوجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين مدرسين ومدرسات اللغة الانكليزية في الكفاية اللغوية حسب متغير الجنس.

قام الباحث ببناء اختبار لتطبيقه على العينة باعتباره الأداة الأساسية لجمع البيانات عن أداء العينة. ولاختبار فرضيتي الدراسة اختيرت عينة مكونة من 58 مدرس ومدرسة من مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية في المدارس المتوسطة في مدينة الرمادي (28 من الذكور و28 من الإناث) والذين تم اختيارهم بطريقة عشوائية. تم تطبيق الاختبار على عينة البحث. وعند تحليل البيانات باستخدام معادلة الاختبار التائي تحت مستوى أهمية 0،05أشارت النتائج إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الوسط الحسابي لتحصيل العينة في الاختبار من جهة، والوسط الفعلي للاختبار من جهة أخرى. كما اضهرت النتائج عدم وجود ذات دلالة إحصائية في الكفاية اللغوية بين مدرسي ومدرسات اللغة الانكليزية حسب متغير الجنس

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study and its Significance

The teacher is the most important element in any learning system because he designs, implements, and develops syllabuses. Hence, he/she has to be competent linguistically and professionally in the language he/she teaches. Also, the teacher should be keen on developing his/ her language skills so as to get well- educated learners who help in developing communities (Mowla, 2008: 272).

Harmer (2007:11) adds that teachers play a key role in developing the educational process in any part of the world. Therefore, Teachers of EFL in general, should be linguistically competent, especially those who teach Iraq opportunities series at the various academic stages in order to achieve the aims behind these new English textbooks.

As far as the researcher knows, pupils are annually transmitted from intermediate into the preparatory schools while their average level in English is highly inconvincing. Moreover, educationalists as well as specialists in teaching EFL at intermediate schools complain of students' weakness in English. This weakness could be attributed to a variety of factors, the prominent of them is teachers' qualifications. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate and identify teachers' linguistic competence as an attempt to reach to some remedial work and beneficial recommendations.

Now, it is widely agreed that the scales have tipped in favour of English as the language of international communication. Also, English is preferred in the key areas of science, technology, trade, and education. Learning English is promoted in increasing number of countries throughout the world because of the benefits that the mastery of English language brings. For this reason, many educational departments make the learning of English compulsory in primary, secondary and preparatory schools (Senior ,2006: 36).

This study is significant because it will assist educators and specialists who are in charge of developing and improving the process of EFL teaching in directing their attention to the actual linguistic competence of intermediate school teachers. Also, the findings of this study will have direct bearing on the type of teachers preparation and work in the field of learning and teaching EFL in Iraq and more specifically in Anbar Governorate because no previous study tackled this area before.

1. 2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at assessing the linguistic competence of teachers who teach English as a foreign language at the intermediate schools in Ramadi, and finding whether EFL teachers vary in the linguistic competence according to the variable of sex.

1. 3 Hypotheses of the Study

it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of intermediate school teachers' achievement, on one hand and the

theoretical mean scores of the linguistic competence test, on the other hand. Also, it is hypothesized that there is no significant difference in the linguistic competence between male and female EFL teachers.

1. 4 Limits of the Study

This study is limited at assessing the linguistic competence of male and female teachers who are teaching EFL at intermediate day schools for boys and girls in the city of Ramadi during the academic year (2012- 2013).

1.5 Definition of Basic Terms

1.5.1 Assessment:

- It means a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence. Assessment may be done by test, interview, questionnaire, observation, etc. (Ritchard & Schmidt, 2002: 35).
- Assessment refers to the tools, techniques and procedures for collecting and interpreting information about what learners can do and cannot do as a result of the instructional process (Nunan, 2003: 85).

The Operational Definition: Assessment is the process of checking and estimating the linguistic competence of EFL intermediate school teachers by using a diagnostic test which includes five components (listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, structure and vocabulary, and writing).

1.5.2 Linguistic Competence:

- It refers to speakers' knowledge of system and rules which they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand non-finite number of sentences, also it enables speakers to recognize grammatical mistakes and ambiguities (Crystal, 2003: 87- 88).
- Linguistic Competence is associated with mastering the linguistic code of a language because it compasses the following: phonology, vocabulary, syntax, and morphology (Brown, 2007: 219).

The Operational Definition: Linguistic competence in this study refers to the components of the grammatical competence which includes (phonology, lexicon, morphology, and syntax) that are incarnated in the basic four skills of English language which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2. Literature Review

2. 1 The Concept of Linguistic Competence

The notion of linguistic competence is first cited by Chomsky in 1965 in his linguistic theory. He distinguished between competence and performance."Competence" for Chomsky is an idealization opposed to "performance" which means the actual use of language. Also, he confirms that linguistic competence underlines the ability to understand what is said and to produce a signal with an intended semantic interpretation. Moreover, he states that competent or ideal speaker-listener can determine the intrinsic meaning of

ambiguous sentences through the internalized system of rules that help him to recognize both, the phonetic shape and semantic meaning of the sentence (Chomsky, 2006: 102).

McDonough (2002: 20) believes that linguistic competence refers to the ability or knowledge of how sentences are constructed in a language, the sound system of a language, and the meaning of the words of the language. Widdowson (2003: 166) believes that it is exclusively a matter of grammatical knowledge.

Carroll illustrates the aspects of productive and receptive skills, e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. As shown in figure (1) you can makes it clear of how aspects of linguistic competence are interrelated with these four skills. Linguistic competence is tabulated crossingly where language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are interrelated with language aspects (phonology/ orthography, morphology, syntax and lexicon). It determines language aspects involved in each skill of the language.

For example, listening skill involves using specific language aspects. These aspects are "phonology" for phoneme recognition and discrimination, "lexicon" is used in recognition of meaning of the lexical elements of (morphemes, words, idioms) and the recognition of the semantic meaning, and "morphology and syntax" which are used in the recognition of morphological and grammatical properties of the spoken language. Through this chart we can check components of the linguistic competence involved in each skill (Sterm, 1991: 350).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2" rowspan="2"></th><th rowspan="2">Phonology and orthography</th><th colspan="2">Lexicon</th><th colspan="2">Grammar</th></tr>
<tr><td>Morphemes, words, idoms</td><td>Semantic and grammatical components of lexicon</td><td>Morphology and syntax</td><td>Semantic components</td></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Spoken language</th><th>Receptive skills (Listening)</th><td>Phoneme recognition and discrimination; ability to discriminate words or phrases differing in one phoneme or distinctive feature [List phoneme pairs to be discriminated]</td><td>Recognition of lexical elements as belonging to the language [List lexicon]</td><td>Recognition of semantic and grammatical meanings (i.e. word class assignments) of lexical elements.</td><td colspan="2">Recognition / Understanding
of morphological and associated phonology [List]</td></tr>
<tr><th>Productive skills (Speaking)</th><td>Phoneme production; ability to produce phonemes or allophonic variants in word forms or phrases, with accuracy at either phonemic or phonetic level [List phonemes of language with variants]</td><td colspan="2">Ability to produce lexical elements fitting semantic and grammatical specifications.</td><td colspan="2">Ability to produce/ In appropriate contexts Morphological and syntactical features with appropriate phonology</td></tr>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Written language</th><th>Receptive skills (Reading)</th><td>Recognition of the graphemic symbols of the language, with (as appropriate) ability to name them and give their sounds [List graphemes]</td><td colspan="2">Above, plus recognition of meanings and pronunciation of written forms (including special graphemic symbols, abbreviations, etc.) [List]</td><td colspan="2">Above, plus recognition of special grammar-related conventions of the written language, such as punctuation, capitalization certain spelling changes, etc. [List such conventions]</td></tr>
<tr><th>Productive skills (Writing)</th><td>Ability to write (by hand or other method) the graphemes of the language, state their customary ordering [List any details not covered above]</td><td>spelling</td><td></td><td colspan="2">As for receptive skills, plus ability to produce written conventions in appropriate contexts.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure (1)
Carroll's Chart of the Linguistic Competence

2.2 Previous Studies

It is necessary to survey some relevant studies that are related to this study. The researcher reviews these studies because they can help developing the present study. The focus in this section is on showing how these studies are similar to this study in terms of aims , samples, procedures and findings. These studies are arranged chronologically according to their date priority as follows:

2.2.1 Ramadhan (1998)

This study aims at:

1. developing a checklist of professional competencies required by primary school teachers of English.
2. assessing the professional competency of primary teachers of English using the checklist developed.

The sample of the study was a group of seventy primary school teachers of English in the city of Baghdad, who have been observed and evaluated by the researcher on the basis of the checklist developed by her as the main instrument of the study.

The results of this study represented in the following:

1. Teachers' aim-related competencies were high.
2. Teachers' activities-related competencies were high.
3. Teachers' competencies related to teaching aids were not much higher than the average.
4. Teachers' teaching-related competencies were high except language competencies that were low.
5. Teachers have got high percentage in practicing general teaching competencies.
6. Teachers' competencies related to evaluation were low.

2.2.2 Essa (2001)

This study aims at:

1. Evaluating the oral efficiency of intermediate school teachers of English.
2. Identifying whether there is any significant difference in the oral efficiency between teachers who are graduated from College of Arts and those who graduated from the College of Education.
3. Identifying whether intermediate school teachers of English vary in their achievement in the various aspects of the oral production test.

The sample of the study included thirty-six teachers from intermediate schools for girls in the city of Baghdad. The researcher constructed oral production test to evaluate oral efficiency of teachers of English.

Results revealed that the sample of the study was of an average standard in their oral efficiency. There was no significant difference between teachers who graduated from the College of Art and those of the College of Education. Another result revealed that the efficiency of teachers was of an average standard in the five aspects of the oral production test.

2.2.3 Jokey (2007)

This study aimed at:

1. Assessing the oral performance of EFL teachers in certain language functions.
2. Identifying errors committed by Iraqi EFL teachers.

The population of the study included 192 teachers of English which have been working as EFL teachers since the academic year 2000-2001 till 2005-2006 in the city of Baghdad. The sample of the study were forty-five teachers of English which represents 25% of the whole population.

The instrument adopted in this study was a scientific recorded observation accompanied with a scientific checklist. The results of the study were that EFL teachers were not as efficient as expected in performing certain language functions. There were errors in pronunciation and inappropriate use of words that suits the context.

2.2.4 Raheem (2007)

This study aimed at assessing oral proficiency of EFL primary school teachers in Iraq. The population of this study covered Iraqi EFL primary school teachers in Baghdad governorate during the academic year 2006-2007.The sample included fifty EFL primary school teachers, twenty-seven from Al-Russfa/2, and twenty-three from Al-Russafa/1.

The researcher has adopted an interview as the main instrument of the study. After administrating the instrument of the study on the study sample, data have been collected and treated statically. Results revealed that Iraqi primary school teachers of English lack the ability to master the elements of oral proficiency.

2.2.5 Discussion of Previous Studies

After presenting these studies, comparisons and discussions between these previous studies and the current one in terms of the main components (aim, sample , research design , procedure, etc.) is necessary to show the relevance of these studies to the present study.

2.2.5.1 Aim

The previous studies adopted different aims i.e. evaluating or assessing the language as well as professional competencies. The aim of Ramadhan (1998) is to assess the professional competencies of EFL primary school teachers. Essa (2001) aims at evaluating the oral efficiency of intermediate school teachers of English. The study of Jokey (2007) aims at assessing the oral performance of EFL teachers in certain language functions. Raheem (2007) aim at assessing oral efficiency of EFL primary school teachers. The present study tends to be more comprehensive than the studies surveyed here because it assess not only the oral efficiency, but also it includes listening, reading, and writing efficiency.

2.2.5.2 Sample

The samples involved in the previous studies are different in size. Ramadhan (1998) includes seventy primary school teachers and Essa (2001) includes thirty-six female teachers. Jokey (2007) involves forty-five teachers. Raheem (2007) involves fifty primary school teachers.

To conclude, the samples of the previous studies range between thirty-six to seventy EFL teachers. The sample of this study includes fifty-six EFL intermediate school teachers.

2.2.5.3 Instrument

Various instruments are employed by the previous studies in order to collect the required data. Observation checklist is utilized by Ramadhan (1998), Jokey (2007) and Raheem (2007). Esaa (2001) as well the current study have constructed a test in order to collect the necessary data.

2.2.5.4 Statistics

Various statistics for analysing the data were used in the previous studies according to the aims and hypotheses of each. In the present study. Ramadhan (1998) used Chi square, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, and Percentage. Essa (2001) used One Sample T-test Formula, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, Percentage, and Two Independent T-test Formula. Jokey (2007) and Raheem (2007) used Percentage and Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula as statistical means in their studies. In the present study, the researcher used Percentage, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, One-Sample T-test Formula, Two Independent T-test Formula.

3. Procedures of Collecting Data

3.1 The Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the present study represents the total number of the teachers of English in the day intermediate schools for boys and girls in the city of Ramadi for the academic year 2012- 2013. After arranging the population according to the variable of sex, a sample of (56) (28 male and 28 female) teachers has been selected randomly. The sample represents 47% of the population of the study.

3.2 The Instrument of the Study

In order to assess the linguistic competence of EFL intermediate school teachers, a test is constructed. The linguistic competence test used in this study is divided into five components, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, structure and vocabulary, and writing. The listening comprehension component consists of four tasks that measure the ability to understand English spoken by native speakers. Tasks have been recorded on CD. The speaking component aims at testing candidates' abilities to speak in the target language and use English language successfully. It is the most challenging of all language tests to prepare,

administer, and score (Madsen, 1983: 147).It consists of four tasks. All of candidates' responses are recorded to help improve the consistency of assessment.

Reading Comprehension Component includes two unseen passages. Testees have to read the given passages and understand both of them, Then testees need to read the items that follow each passage and their options in order to identify the right choices among the options. Structure and vocabulary component includes four tasks. Finally, the writing component, this section includes two topics. Testees need to select only one topic through which they expresses themselves freely. This section is supposed to measure the testees' ability to handle free writing tasks (See Appendix).

3.3 Test Validity

Before applying the test, its validity has to be ensured as it widely confirmed that validity is an identifying characteristic of a good test. McNamara (2000:48) maintains that the purpose of validation in language testing is to ensure the defensibility and fairness of interpretation based on test performance. Carroll and Hall (1985:123) add that" if we do not give attention to this crucial aspect, validity, we will have no evidence whether we are testing what we hope".

According to Heaton (1988:53) validity of the test means the extent to which it measures what is supposed to measure. There are four major types of validity: construct validity, empirical validity, content validity, and face validity (Al-Juboury,1999: 24-26).

3.4 Content Validity

McNamara (2000:132) defines content validity as the extent to which the test appropriately samples from the domain of knowledge and skills relevant to performance in the criterion. In developing a test, we should begin with a definition of the content or ability domain or with a list of content areas, from which we generate items, or test tasks (Bachman,1990:244). The consideration of test content is thus an important part of both test construction and test use.

3.5 Face Validity

An instrument is considered to have face validity in case that its items are well accepted by other testers, moderators, and teachers (Hughes, 2003: 22). Face validity is the extent to which an assessment procedure measures what it claims to measure (Carter and Nunan, 2004: 227). Moreover, McNamara (2000: 133) states that it is important to decide on the extent to which a test meets the expectation of those involved in its use, e.g. administrators, teachers, candidates and test score users.

Accordingly, face validity of the linguistic competence test is ensured by exposing the initial form of the test to a jury members. The jury includes seventeen members who are specialized in linguistics, methodology and teaching EFL. Each juror is requested to point out his remarks, modifications and suggestions about the suitability of the test items. The jury members are arranged according to their academic ranks alphabetically:

1. Prof. Amir B. Al-Kubaisy, Ph.D (Al-Iraqi University)
2. Prof. Muslih Shwaish Al-Heety, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
3. Prof. Zeidan Khalaf, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
4. Asst. Prof. Alaa' Ismael Chaloub, M.A. (University of Anbar)
5. Asst. Prof. Ayad Hammad Al-Assafi, M.A. (University of Anbar)
6. Asst. Prof. Hussein Sha'aban, Ph.D (University of Tikrit)
7. Asst. Prof. Kamal H. Hussein, Ph.D (University of Mosul)
8. Asst. Prof. Muayyad Mohammad Saed, Ph.D (University of Baghdad)
9. Asst. Prof. Najim Obied Dawood Al-Juboury, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
10. Asst. Prof. Qais Abdul-Majeed, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
11. Asst. Prof. Rafi' M. Al-Mahdawi (University of Anbar)
12. Asst. Prof. Salam Hamid Abbas, Ph.D (University of Baghdad)
13. Asst. Prof. Shoaib Saeed Fahady, Ph.D (University of Mosul)
14. Asst. Prof. Waes Jallaoud, Ph.D (University of Mosul)
15. Ins. Ali Sabah Jameel, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
16. Ins. Hutheifa Y. Turki, M.A. (University of Anbar)
17. Ins. Saad Juma'a Farhan , M.A. (Directorate of Education in Anbar)

Also, the scoring scheme of speaking and writing components have been exposed to a jury of specialists so as to ensure validity. The jury includes ten experts who are specialized in linguistics, phonetics, and methodology. All the jury members have agreed on the validity of the scoring scheme of both speaking and writing components, which means 100% agreement. The jury members are arranged according to their academic ranks alphabetically:

1. Prof. Muslih Shwaish Al-Heety, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
2. Prof. Zeidan Khalaf, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
3. Asst. Prof. Ala'a Ismael Chaloub, M.A. (University of Anbar)
4. Asst. Prof. Ayad Hammad Al-Assafi, M.A. (University of Anbar)
5. Asst. Prof. Najim Obied Al-Juboury, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
6. Asst. Prof. Qais Abdul-Majeed, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
7. Asst. Prof. Rafi' M. Al-Mahdawi (University of Anbar)
8. Ins. Ali Sabah Jameel, Ph.D (University of Anbar)
9. Ins. Hutheifa Y. Turki, M.A. (University of Anbar)
10. Ins. Sa'ad Juma'a Al-Farhan, M.A. (Directorate of Education in Anbar)

3.6 Pilot Study

The test has been administrated empirically to a sample of fifteen ISTs of English selected from the area of the center of Ramadi. The purpose of pilot administration is to estimate the appropriateness of the constructed test to the teachers' ability, check the estimated average time required for each testee to answer the items of the test, identify ambiguous and unsuitable items, determine their level of difficulty, determine the discrimination power of items, estimate the effectiveness of distractors (in multiple choice items), and to try out the clarity of the test instructions. The pilot administration of the linguistic competence test has demonstrated that the average time required to accomplish the whole test is 110 minutes since testees finished their responses in 100- 120 minutes.

3.6.1 Reliability of the Test

Reliability indicates the quality of test scores which refers to the consistency of measures across different times, test forms, raters, and other characteristics of the measurement context (Mousavi, 1999: 323). A reliable test is the one that produces essentially the same results consistently on different occasions when the candidates of the test remain the same (Madsen, 1983: 179).

There are various ways of calculating test reliability. The aim of all these procedures is to obtain two sets of scores of the same test or equivalent forms by the same testees and to find out the correlation between them. Test-retest method is used to find out the reliability of the instrument of this study. This method achieved by giving the same test twice to the same group with a time interval of about two weeks between the tests (Mousavi, 1999: 324).

The Pearson Formula is used to obtain the coefficient of correlation of the testees' scores between the first and second administration of the test(*). The Pearson coefficient of correlation is found to be 0.82, and this correlation is fairly high.

3.6.2 Item Analysis

Item analysis can be defined as "a means of estimating how much information each single item in a test contributes to the information provided by the test as a whole.It enables the test writer to find out how easy or difficult an item is,and how well it distinguishes the better students from the poorer ones" (Cervants,1989:11). The scores of the sample have been divided into two groups: the highest half represents the high group of testees, while the rest of scores represents the low group of testees.

3.6.2.1 Difficulty Level

Level of difficulty means the percentage of wrong answers to certain questions compared with the number of the examined students. The purpose of this measurement is to omit the inappropriate items. The acceptable difficulty level should range between 20-80% (Madsen,1983:180).Results indicated that all the items of the linguistic competence test are proved to be of an acceptable level of difficulty. The difficulty level of items ranges between (32) to (70) percent except few items which have been deleted or substituted.

3.6.2.2 Discrimination Power

In order to find out the discrimination power (DP) of test items, the same high and low groups are used. Then the number getting each item right in the low group of testees is abstracted from the number getting it right in the high group of testees. This figure is divided by the total number of testees in the high, and low groups combined.

(*) The first administration stated from 16th of December until 21st of December 2012. The second administration of the test started from 6th of January until 13th of January 2013.

Results point out that the discrimination power of the items ranges between (35) to (81) percent; therefore, they are considered acceptable, except four items which have been substituted or deleted.

3.6.2.3 Attractiveness of Distracters

The effectiveness of distracters in multiple choice items (i.e. the attractiveness of the incorrect alternatives) has been evaluated by using the formula specified for this purpose. Results indicate that all distracters are effect in since they have attracted more testees from the low group than the high group, except three distracters, which have been replaced by others.

3.7 Final Administration of the Test

The linguistic competence test has been administrated during the second half of the academic year 2013. The sample of 56 ISTs have been visited by the researcher at their schools. Each member in the sample informed about the aim of the test before distributing the test booklets. They have been asked to take a general look at the various sections and tasks of the test and read the instructions of each task carefully before answering it the test booklet, except the answers of the listening component of the test which have been recorded to ensure consistent scoring for them.

3.8 The Scoring of the Linguistic Competence Test

The scoring of listening, vocabulary and structure, and reading comprehension components of the test is objective. While scoring of speaking and writing component is subjective, therefore the researcher constructed scoring scheme for both. The scoring scheme of speaking includes five criteria. These criteria permit the researcher to measure the following aspects: 1.Pronunciation 2.Fluency 3.Structural Accuracy 4.Appropriatness 5.Intelligibility. Each criterion through all tasks has been listened to and counted as being excellent, very good, good, fair or weak at a time. Each criterion is allotted ten marks distributed among its five levels as follows: 10- 9 are given to excellent, 8- 7 are given to very good, 6- 5 are given to good, 3- 4 are given to fair, and 2- 1 are given to weak.

The scoring scheme of writing includes five criteria. These criteria permit the researcher to measure the following aspects: 1.Grammar 2.Mechanics 3.Appropriatness 4.Coherence 5.Relevance (Nunan, 2003:94 & Al-Juboury, 1999:142). Ten marks are given to each criterion. Each criterion is allotted ten marks distributed among its five levels as follows: 10- 9 are given to excellent, 8- 7 are given to very good, 6- 5 are given to good, 3- 4 are given to fair, and 2- 1 are given to weak.

3.9 Statistics

The following statistics have been used to achieve the aims of the present study and test its hypotheses:

1. One Sample t-test is used to find out the level of the achievement of the EFL intermediate school teachers in the linguistic competence test.

$$t = \frac{\overline{X} - \mu}{S / \sqrt{N-1}}$$

Where:

$\overline{X}$ = Mean

S = Standard deviation

N= Number of subjects (Guilford, 1965:185)

2. Two samples t–test of the two tailed type for independent samples has been used to test the differences in the linguistic competence between male and female teachers according to the variable of sex.

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2(N_1 - 1) + S_2^2(N_2 - 1)}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}\left(\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}\right)}}$$

Where:

$\overline{x}_1$ = mean of the group 1

$\overline{x}_2$ = mean of the group 2

S_1 = variance of the group 1

S_2 = variance of the group 2

n_1 = number of subjects in the group 1

n_2 = number of subjects in the group 2 (Glass and Stanley, 1970: 295)

3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient:

It is used to measure the reliability of the linguistic competence test by using the test-retest method.

$$rxy = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum x)\,(xy)}{\sqrt{\left[N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\right] - \left[N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\right]}}$$

Where

r= Correlation coefficient

n= Sample size.

∑x = The sum of X scores

∑y = The sum of Y scores

∑x2 = The sum of the squares of X scores

∑y2 = The sum of the squares of Y scores

∑xy = The sum of the products of X and Y scores for each student.

Glass and Stanley (1970: 119)

4. Difficulty Level

It is used to measure the difficulty level of the items of the linguistic competence test.

$$DL = \frac{HC + LC}{N}$$

Where

Hc = high correct

Lc = low correct

N = total number of testees. (Madsen,1983:181)

5. Discrimination Power:

It is used to measure the discrimination power of the items of the linguistic competence test.

$$DP = \frac{N_1 - N_2}{N/2} x100$$

DP= Discrimination power equation.

N1 = The sum of the right answers of the upper group.

N2 = The sum of the right answers of the lower group.

N = The total number of the sample.

(Gronlund: 1976: 267-268)

6. The Effectiveness of Distractors = $\frac{\boldsymbol{RU - RL}}{1/2\ T}$

Where

RU= The number of testees in the high group who got the items right.

RL= The number of testees in the low group who got the items right.

1/2 T= One half of the total number of testees included in the item analysis.

(Gronlund, 1968: 113)

4.1 Results :

To achieve the aims of the study and verify its hypotheses, the researcher has used the mean , standard deviation, One Sample t- test and t-test for two Independent Samples . Besides, data was treated by using the statistical programme known as "the statistical package for social sciences" (SPSS). In respect to the first hypothesis, one sample t-test formula is used to compare the mean scores of the subjects' grades on the linguistic competence test which is found to be 135.16 and a standard deviation of 22.06, with the theoretical mean of the linguistic competence test which is found to be 100[(*)]. The computed t-test value has appeared to be 11.92 which is higher than the tabulated t-test value which is 2.06. This signifies that it is statically significant on the level of 0.05 and the degree of freedom 55. See Table (1) . This indicates that the mean scores of

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[(*)] The theoretical mean is found out by the following equation:

Theoretical mean= $\frac{\text{Higher score} + \text{Lower Score}}{2}$

the sample which is 135.16 ranges over the theoretical mean which is 100; therefore, the first hypothesis is rejected.

Table (1)
Results of T-test in Respect to the Level of the Linguistic Competence of EFL Intermediate School Teachers

No. of Sample	$\overline{X}$	SD	D.F	Theoretical Mean	Computed t-value	Tabulated t-value	Level of significance
56	135.16	22.06	55	100	11.92	2.06	0.05

In respect to the second hypothesis of this study which intends to find out whether intermediate school teachers vary in their linguistic competence in terms of their sex, data were analysed by using two independent samples T-test. By comparing the mean scores of male intermediate school teachers which is (134.07) and whose standard deviation is (22.49), with the mean scores of the female intermediate school teachers which is (136.25), and whose standard deviation is (21.99), results revealed that the computed T-test value which is (0.376) is found to be less than the tabulated T-test value which is (2.008) when the level of significance is 0.05 and the degree of freedom is (54). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the linguistic competence between male and female intermediate school teachers; therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is accepted as shown in Table (2)

Table (2)
The T-test Value of the Male and Female EFL Intermediate School Teachers

Gender	No. of Teachers	Mean	Standard Deviation	D.F	Computed T-test value	Tabulated T-test value	L.S
Male	28	134.07	22.49	54	0.376	2.008	0.05
Female	28	136.25	21.99				

4.2 Discussion of the Results

As shown earlier in the statistical analysis of the data obtained, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of intermediate school teachers' achievement and the theoretical mean of linguistic test. This means that the linguistic competence of intermediate school teachers is generally within average, yet they have weaknesses in their linguistic competence specially in speaking and listening skill. The general standards of EFL intermediate school teachers in Ramadi is not adequate as it should be. Also, as shown in the statistical analysis of data obtained, there is no significant difference in the linguistic competence between male and female intermediate school teachers. This means that male and

female intermediate school teachers have got the same level in linguistic competence.

4.3 Conclusions

In the light of the preceding results, the following conclusions are put forward:

1. EFL intermediate school teachers in the city of Ramadi are not as competent as it should be.

2.EFL teachers do not develop their linguistic competence through self-development.

3.There is a clear weakness in the sample's level in speaking and listening comprehension efficiency.

4. Male and female EFL intermediate school teachers were equally trained so as to become EFL teachers.

4.4 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the present study, a number of recommendations can be drawn:

1. It is recommended that ISTs of EFL in Iraq should be continuously involved with in-service training courses so as to develop their linguistic competence, especially in the aural-oral matters.
2. More opportunities for the particle use of the language should be provided during pre-service training through encouragement to practice the various language courses orally, also through the creation of discussion groups, competitions, public lectures, debates, etc.
3. There should be at least one experienced EFL teacher in all schools order to be a source advices and recommendations for novice teacher, subsequently this will accelerate the development of novice teachers of EFL.
4. Supervisors should recommend EFL teachers to speak in the target language through lessons because this will strengthen speaking skill.

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